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ABSTRACT

The role of mentoring in the 2 + 2 Instrumentation and Control (I&C) articulation project between the Leander Independent School District (LISD) and Austin Community College (ACC) is discussed in this document. Following a brief history of the origin and function of the mentor, the paper explains the need for the mentoring system in the I&C curriculum, particularly to help at-risk students, females, and four-year college aspirants to adjust to the idea of pursuing a two-year technical degree. After defining the purpose and systems approach of the mentoring program, the paper lists the goals established for program mentors, including: (1) introduce students to advanced-technology workplaces and likewise visit the classroom; (2) help students see the value of setting goals; (3) orient students to the variety of technical jobs and levels of employment in the mentor's workplace; and (4) serve as a role model, counselor, friend, guide, and, possible, adjunct faculty member, tutor, or advisor. Next, each step of the mentoring process is described, highlighting the activities and tasks to be completed during the year in which the students choose the I&C curriculum, the two remaining years of high school, and the two years at ACC. A brief description of the benefits of mentoring, both from the business perspective and for the individual mentors, is offered next. The final section outlines a process for planning future mentoring projects, including a series of questions designed to be asked about mentoring programs in general. (JMC)

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MENTORING IN 2+2 PROGRAMS

LISD / ACC 2+2 ARTICULATION PROJECT

Prepared for the

Leander Independent School District

JC 900085

Prepared by the

Center for Occupational Research and Development

Waco, Texas

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RATIONALE FOR THE MENTORING PROJECT

Studies that document student retention factors have proven many times that the linkage of students to a "significant other" is a critical factor in keeping students in the program. Because of the difficulty of the subject matter in technical programs, and because "a new breed" of students are entering these programs, retaining students is an important issue. The "basic skills" requirements for high school graduation are increasing throughout the nation (source: information compiled by the Southern Regional Education Board with information from the State Departments of Education, January 1987). The workers who will join the labor force between now and the year 2000 are not well-matched to the jobs that the economy is creating (source: **Workforce 2000**, page 76). In fact, "This nation may face a future divided not along lines of race or geography but of educational attainment," according to the 1988 report, **The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America.** (This report underscores the plight of 20 million 16-24-year-olds who face major roadblocks in the transition from school to work.)

Looking at the Origins of Mentoring

Many people believe that the idea of mentoring sprang from the old apprenticeship era, back in the days when men like Benjamin Franklin were indentured for years before being allowed to strike out on their own. There is no doubt that the apprenticeship was a convenient setting in which mentoring could occur. The concept of mentoring, however, goes back much farther in history than that.

Almost every publication that discusses the mentoring process begins by explaining that the word "mentor" comes from the time of Homer--almost impossible to imagine as life in the 12th century B.C. In his book, **The Odyssey**, Homer refers to a character named Mentor. It is to Mentor that Odysseus, preparing to begin an epic voyage, entrusts his son. Odysseus asks Mentor, as his most trusted friend, to guide his son in the passage from boyhood to manhood.

Most descriptions stop there. But through reading **The Odyssey**, one may learn that Mentor, who is an Ithacan elder, often has his body taken over by Athena, the Greek goddess of war, wisdom, and craft. Therefore, when Mentor's body was taken over by Athena, he was given the goddess's glorious qualities as he "mentored" Odysseus' son.

Athena, queen of the Greek mythological world, sprang fully grown from the head of Zeus, who was the chief executive officer of the Greek religious hierarchy. In mythological history, Athena symbolized the highest quality in Athenian society--wisdom. The Greek word is "sophia," which means "the-knowing-how-which-leads-to-wisdom." She was the patron of all the arts, the teacher, the soldier, and the philosopher. For these attributes, she was worshipped from the 12th century B.C. well into the sixth century A.D.

Predicting the Qualities of Model Mentors; Forecasting the Benefits

Model mentors in today's society may not stop much short of being worshipped by their proteges--for it is the mentor who often makes the difference between success and failure on the job throughout a lifetime of careers. Think back to your first "real" job. Was there someone there who served as a guide, a sponsor, a counselor, a coach, a resource--and perhaps eventually, a colleague? A model mentor must possess maturity, self-assurance, and patience--and must have confidence in and empathy for the person being nurtured. A model mentor must be more than a skilled employee; he/she must also be a skillful communicator and a good listener.

Mentoring requires extra effort. Compensation is intangible. Those who participate in the process, however, often say they find the experience rewarding, a chance to "pass the torch." Mentoring is profitable--from both a personal and a business standpoint. From the personal side, the experience of helping a novice grow is enriching and rejuvenating. Active mentoring may actually increase one's own level of productivity and quality of life.

Functioning as a Mentor

The functions of the mentor, as described in the **Mentor Handbook** (source: Evergreen School District of Vancouver, Washington, and the Evergreen Teacher Training Consortium) are: to participate in informal contact, to assist with a professional development plan, to observe and give feedback, to demonstrate, to be a role model, and to give direct assistance as appropriate.

The role of the mentor in the LISD/ACC 2 + 2 project will include being both a leader and a learner. By leading, the mentor will provide direction. By learning, the mentor will show that intellectual evolution and the infusion of new information is a necessary part of the lifelong learning process--mentors can show students by example that the ability to learn is each individual's hedge against obsolescence.

THE NEED FOR A MENTORING SYSTEM FOR I&C STUDENTS

Most mentoring programs in place today are geared to helping "at-risk" students. Research shows that using a mentoring process with such students produces spectacular "holding power" while it introduces students to the "work ethic." Approximately 25% of the students who will comprise the initial I&C group fit into the "at-risk" category.

The mentoring system will help students who might not have thought of a technical career think of pursuing one. A special factor at LISD is that students who enroll in the I&C program have to give up the "advanced track." This means their parents have to adjust to the idea that their child will not be

eligible to attend The University of Texas or Texas A&M University. Therefore, one goal of the mentoring aspect will be to raise the self-esteem of students who might otherwise have been planning to obtain a four-year degree from either of Texas' largest institutions.

While there is a higher percentage of female students in Principles of Technology than one usually finds in nontraditional vocational courses, only three female students have enrolled in the I&C program so far. Therefore, one emphasis of the mentoring system at LISD will be on helping female students adjust to the idea of pursuing a technical career. Most parents of female students are reluctant to allow their daughters to enter programs where the majority of students are male and the job is usually filled by a male worker.

A mentoring system that links female role models to female I&C students will enable these female students--as well as their parents and peers--to see that women can have productive technical careers. If female role models are linked to these students, they will have a role model in a technical field with whom they can discuss their future. Male mentors will be extremely helpful also--since many of these young women have not ever been acquainted with anyone in a technician occupation. Seeing these female students be successful in the I&C program will encourage other female students to enter in subsequent years, since many stereotypes still exist about the suitability of women for such careers.

There are good reasons for moving women into technical careers. First, technical jobs pay more than more traditional "female" jobs. Second, women may have a better chance of finding a job opening in a technical job. Third, even jobs that once were not considered "technical" are becoming so--and most are becoming more technical every day. Fourth, some traditionally "female jobs" are being displaced by technology. Fifth, the four criteria which most people value in a job--accomplishment, challenge, relatedness, and autonomy--are most easy to obtain in a technical career. Sixth, by moving more women into higher-paying and more challenging jobs, the society as a whole benefits from these women's higher standard of living. Seventh, increasing the number of female workers skilled in technical occupations can help alleviate the predicted shortages of workers in these fields.

Furthermore, one of the purposes of 2+2 articulation at LISD--and of the mentoring system--will be to help students who may not be considering college "stay focused," according to LISD Counselor Hubert Dixon. Dixon believes that the mentoring system will be an important human link on many students' paths to postsecondary education, since "many of our students just don't understand what jobs are out there." Students will be able to see first-hand why staying in school is a good idea.

A special factor that must be figured into the mentoring project at LISD is that most LISD students' parents are determined that their children will receive four-year degrees. There is evidence, however, that many jobs in the coming years will not require a four-year degree. Some future jobs will require no degree. Others will require an associate of arts degree and "lifelong learning" instead. LISD parents may be unaccustomed to thinking along these

lines. Therefore, the parents of students in the Instrumentation and Control curriculum at LISD will need "evidence" that productive careers can be possible--in vocational programs in general and through completing the I&C curriculum in particular. Mentors are the perfect kind of "evidence" that is needed.

Defining the Purpose of Mentoring Partnerships

The general purpose of mentoring partnerships--and partnerships between business and education as well--is to make the transition from the classroom to the work place more smooth for students. Mentoring can help leverage human capital, and every person involved in the mentoring process can benefit. Furthermore, leveraging human capital always means saving dollars--as well as maximizing human resources.

Using Mentoring to Leverage Human Capital

Maximizing human resources is important. Today, education is being recognized as an integral part of our national defense system. As Dale Parnell, Executive Director of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges says in his book, **The Neglected Majority**, "History will gauge this generation primarily by what we have done with our human resources and our human values. If we do not cultivate the best in our people and fully utilize our human resources, we become a wasteful society regardless of what else we do." (Source: **The Neglected Majority**, page 172.)

Parnell continues his advice by offering seven recommendations for cultivating excellence in schools--and each of Parnell's recommendations has an application in the mentoring process. In his first recommendation, Parnell says all students need a student-centered curriculum. We must keep in mind that what Richard Bach says in his book, **Illusions**, is also true. "We are all students. We are all teachers... . We teach best what we most need to know." Paraphrased, this means we never outgrow our need for mentoring--inside or outside the classroom. Establishing a mentoring process for students while they are still in school is a good way to introduce them to the idea that mentors can benefit proteges throughout a lifetime. It is by being mentored that we learn how to mentor.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY: MENTORING THROUGH A SYSTEMS APPROACH

The purpose of mentoring is to help students. Yet each person involved in the education process is both a student and a teacher. Quality mentoring is best accomplished through a **systems approach**. Each participant in the education process is important--state personnel; local school administrators, teachers, and counselors; the public, including parents of students; and finally and most importantly,the secondary and postsecondary students themselves.

Each one is an important cog in the wheel that turns out quality administration, quality teaching, and quality graduates. The goal of mentoring is to develop winners...throughout the system.

Parnell's second recommendation is that students must experience greater structure and substance. The mentoring process recommended in this document will have a time line (see "The Plan" section) and list specific activities and specific goals to be accomplished. (See the "Mentor-Protege Action Plan" that accompanies this document.)

One of the recurring problems in mentoring attempts throughout the last few years has been that there were not enough substantive activities incorporated into the process. Two people were supposed to "just get together and talk." Since mentors are usually formed in a less formal way (i.e., two people just "match up" informally and begin to exchange experiences and communicate), this attempt to link people in a formal way must have some tasks for the two people involved to do until their relationship has time to evolve more naturally--ideally, until a time when trust and gut-level communication may surface and flourish.

Parnell's third recommendation is that students must see coherence in their educational program. The 2 + 2 movement grew from this need. It was a way to give clear signals about the preparatory requirements for succeeding in postsecondary schools--in this case, mentoring in the 2 + 2 project will light the path to various technical careers.

Fourth, Parnell says students "must see connectedness" between what they do and the larger world--between education and the rest of the world. Mentors will serve as a "real world" contact for LISD and ACC students. Seeing people perform jobs in the "real world" is an excellent way for students to see the connectedness between those skills taught in the vocational classroom and the skills taught in the academic classroom. Those walls are slowly breaking down in education; those walls do not exist on the job.

Fifth, Parnell recommends that students experience continuity in learning. Then he asks the question: "Can a clearly focused tech-prep/associate-degree program prevent loss of continuity of learning?" CORD believes it can. Mentoring will provide students with a "real-world," "human link" as students proceed through each of the four years.

Sixth, Parnell recommends that students be offered a larger range of choices, so that their lives and work are not unnecessarily degrading, or boring, or limiting. Many people, particularly the parents of high-school-age youth and displaced workers, see technical occupations as they were 20, 10 or 5 years ago. Mentors can provide students with an opportunity to see people at work in a the vast and growing number of occupations now available in the "technical" world. (By the way, four out of five jobs that will be available to today's kindergarten student don't even exist yet.) A "technical" job isn't what it used to be--it's more--and the credentials for obtaining and keeping one are more rigorous. Technical training used to be associated only with careers related to engineering; today's technical careers span the vocational clusters--and pop up in many of today's "academic" occupations as well.

Visits to work sites and visits from a variety of mentors to the classroom (incorporated as part of the plan suggested here) will serve to broaden horizons and career expectations for students. This should be particularly beneficial to the female students, since they may not have access to role models who have chosen technical careers in traditionally non-female occupations. Males who are interested in health occupations careers may also see that the sexist demarcations once predominant in that field also have evaporated.

Seventh, Parnell says that students must see the necessity to continue to learn. One of the qualities listed as criteria for potential mentors in this program is a commitment to learning--both as a presenter of learning opportunities to others and to one's own intellectual growth. Today's rapidly changing technological environment calls for lifelong learning. Mentors will help students in LISD and ACC's 2 + 2 process see this phenomenon in action. The ability to be a lifelong learner is the only defense today's worker has against obsolescence.

A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE MENTORING PROCESS

The good news is that the mentoring system in the LISD/ACC 2 + 2 process started with the first feasibility meeting about the **Principles of Technology** project, begun in tandem with the 2 + 2 project. At that time, the first rule for establishing a successful mentoring project was followed: **Involve everyone early.** Other "success factors" for the mentoring process include the leadership and commitment to the project "from the top" at LISD, ACC and the business community; relationships between all parties that are built on respect and trust; a benefit from the process for all parties involved; and the wisdom to put agreements in writing, start small and build, and communicate along the way. Therefore, the suggestions for mentoring goals and activities that appear here evolved quite naturally as part of other activities.

Mentoring through a Performance-Objective Approach

The goals established for mentors in the program, as stated by the Advisory Committee, are:

1. Introduce students to advanced-technology work places. Likewise, visit the classroom to see what's happening.
2. Help students see the value of setting goals and of adhering to the work ethic.
3. Orient students to the variety of technical jobs--and various levels of employment--within the mentor's workplace.
4. Direct students through a meaningful plan of study to reach the goals of the program (the 2 + 2 process).
5. Establish a starting place for students by reviewing assessments (interest inventory test, etc.) and overseeing the development of a "career passport." (The "career passport" is a computer program that

the student can use throughout high school to keep a record of all accomplishments. As the need arises, students can use that data to prepare a computer-generated resume.) Mentors also will assist students in role-playing for job interviews.

6. Serve as a role model, i.e., show the applications of what students are learning in the classroom to the mentor's workplace. Mentors also will help the teacher reinforce lessons by explaining the transition from concept to application. When working with students, mentors should emphasize "success factors"--as determined in the 2 + 2 articulation project survey of employers. Success factors, in order of priority, include: team playing, teaching/learning attitude, communication skills, creativity, leadership skills, commitment to one's ongoing education, and experience with the company (work ethic).
7. Serve as a counselor and friend, i.e., be a cheerleader, act as a sounding board for ideas or the venting of problems, be a positive reinforcer. The mentor can serve as an "escape" valve by listening and helping to relieve anxieties as they arise.
8. Be willing to act as a guide, i.e., to be able to present the "big picture/small picture" as the need arises.
9. Mentors also may be requested to serve as an adjunct faculty member, adviser, or tutor.
10. Mentors may also work with parents, teachers, and others as a counselor, guide, and role model, helping to show where the students' efforts will lead.

Mentors are not required to request that their companies participate in a cooperative work/education programs or to provide scholarships, although this activity is encouraged.

Beginning the Mentoring Process

An LISD employee will coordinate the mentoring process. Advisory Committee members suggest that the following activities be completed at each grade level--in years one through four of the 2 + 2 program.

During the grade at which students choose the I&C program, the following tasks/activities will be completed:

- Students' potential for success in the program will be assessed by employing a career/interest-inventory test.
- If necessary, remediation/upgrading will begin in mathematics and reading.
- A Parents' Orientation Night about 2 + 2 will be held.
- A letter will be mailed to each student's parent(s) to explain the program's requirements (course outline, grading system, etc.) and career options.
- There will be an individual counseling session for each student.
- Students should enroll in Applied Mathematics as preparation for Principles of Technology. (LISD is currently requiring Algebra I.)

- "Adoption" of new students by junior **Principles of Technology** Students at LISD should occur. This senior-level student will serve as a mentor to new juniors as part of "the buddy system.")

First-Year of 2 + 2 Program (High School Juniors)

- A Back-to-School party will be held for mentors and students. Information sheets will have been exchanged before the event. This activity will constitute the mentor/protege training session, but will be disguised as a social activity. During this activity, students will be "matched" with mentors. An orientation presentation will explain the mentoring system and what's expected of each participant. Then each team will complete a Mentor/Protege Action Contract. Mentors should follow-up this activity with a letter and a phone call (which will allow time for future discussions of the contract). As an evaluation technique, the mentoring process coordinator will follow up this activity with phone calls to selected individuals to evaluate the effectiveness of the exchange.
- Throughout this novice year, mentors should reinforce the importance of learning the basics--reading, writing and mathematics--as well as the importance of keeping up in first-year work. Emphasize good study habits.
- Mentors will serve as guest lecturers to the PT classes in the Fall.
- Students will visit at least two industries on a group field trip in the Spring.
- Individual visits will be planned as possible, with mentors visiting the school to eat lunch and attend afternoon classes with their student in the Fall, and the student visiting the mentor at the work site in the Spring.
- Toward the end of the Spring semester, students and mentors will complete an anonymous evaluation form that will be mailed to the mentoring project coordinator regarding their experiences in the mentoring process (so that the process can improve as it evolves). The mentoring process coordinator will oversee day-to-day operational duties as they arise. A list of mentors and proteges involved in the program will be kept in the coordinator's office.
- First-year students and their mentors will be invited to a Spring "dutch treat" banquet sponsored by LISD and ACC.

Summer Between Junior and Senior Year--High School

- Summer mentoring activities will focus on the teacher also. The teachers in the 2 + 2 program should have an opportunity to meet with mentors from industry, do some shadowing at industry sites, obtain a summer job in a technician occupation (perhaps as part of an Educators in Industry project in the future), and/or attend teacher training for **Principles of Technology** and/or **Applied Mathematics**, etc. (It is anticipated that such teacher training will eventually be available in Texas as part of undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs. Both Texas A&M and North Texas State University have

expressed an interest in setting up such programs once the courses exit their "experimental" phase. Teacher ed programs have already been institutionalized in Utah, Minnesota, Colorado, Kansas, and other locations.) Students may be encouraged to complete some kind of "summer project" for presentation in the Fall when they return to LISD.

Second-Year I&C Students (Senior High School Students)

- A Back-To-School party will be held at LISD in September. Mentors and proteges will complete another Mentor/Protege Action Contract, and mentors will write letters to their proteges and discuss the contract in a follow-up phone call. The mentoring process coordinator will follow up this activity with phone calls to selected individuals to evaluate the effectiveness of this activity.
- Mentors will emphasize that study habits must be top-notch in order to prepare for college-level work.
- Mentors also will begin to groom the protege for the world of work, discussing such topics as ethics, punctuality, etc., in scheduled phone conversations and/or on-site visits.
- Mentors will visit the school one day in the Fall, eating lunch in the school cafeteria and going through afternoon classes with the student.
- Students will visit the job site in the Spring, with opportunities to interview various technicians on the job.
- If possible, the mentors should visit the school to assist students with their "career passport" preparation. (Students will have been using a computer program during high school to enter data than can produce a computer-generated resume.) This will allow the mentor and the protege time to reflect on accomplishments to date.
- Mentors may want to consider asking their companies to offer tuition reimbursement, part-time work, or scholarship opportunities for which proteges might apply.
- At the end of the year, LISD and ACC seniors will host a "dutch treat" banquet for LISD/ACC staff, Advisory Committee members, students in both institutions, parents, and mentors. This will be an opportunity to recognize outstanding mentors, students and others. At this banquet, ACC freshmen will adopt LISD seniors who plan to enter ACC as freshmen the following year (when the ACC students are sophomores).
- The Counseling Department will assess each student's skills level during the Spring semester at LISD. If remediation in reading and/or mathematics is in order, such activity should begin in the summer before enrollment into the ACC curriculum--if at all possible--in an auxiliary "head start" or "tech prep" program.
- Toward the end of the year, proteges and mentors will complete an anonymous evaluation form regarding the mentoring process that can be used to assess program effectiveness and make necessary improvements.
- A listing of any available summer jobs at Austin advanced technology industries should be made available to all students. These need not be

technician jobs. Any job will give the student insight into the world of work.

Summer Between High School and College

- Activities similar to the previous summer are encouraged for both the teachers and the students. If possible, this would be an excellent time to employ students in jobs that would at least allow them to talk with technicians on a day-to-day basis. Those students who need remediation in mathematics or reading should be counselled to obtain tutoring during the summer.

Third-Year I&C Student (First-Year ACC Student)

- In the Fall, ACC's I&C Department will host a get-together for students (and their "significant others"), mentors, advisory board members, etc., where an orientation about what to expect at ACC can occur. This will serve as mentor/protege training for the postsecondary portion of the mentoring program. At this get-together, each ACC I&C student can complete a Mentor/Protege Action Plan for the year. Mentors will follow up with a letter and a phone call to discuss the contract. The mentoring process coordinator will follow up this activity with a phone call to selected individuals to assess the effectiveness of this activity.
- First-year ACC students will have been "adopted" on the buddy system at ACC by ACC sophomores. These student mentors will help first-year students adjust to the community college climate.
- Students will go on two field trips in the Fall that are very much structured to the Instrumentation and Control field. During these trips, students should not only have the opportunity to see the work site, but also to hear from various workers there and to ask questions, etc.
- Mentors will serve as adjunct faculty by appearing as guest speakers and serving as resource personnel.
- Many community college students must work in order to finance their education. Therefore, if possible, students should be allowed to interview for any available part-time jobs in Austin's advanced technology industries. Mentors may want to assist the students in this endeavor by providing all students in the ACC program with a listing of available employment opportunities.

- Remember the Spring "dutch treat" banquet occurs at the end of the year for everyone involved in the mentoring program. This is the time to honor people for jobs "well-done" and would be a good opportunity to announce job and scholarship opportunities, etc.

Summer Between Freshman and Sophomore Year

- Every effort should be made to get each ACC student into a summer internship program with an advanced technology industry.
- Mentors may want to consider asking their companies to allow students to apply for tuition reimbursement or scholarships.

- Teachers should be encouraged to do some job "shadowing" or acquire a summer job as a technician to remain at state-of-the-art capability.

Fourth-Year 2 + 2 Student (Second-Year ACC Student)

- Mentors and proteges will attend the Back-to-School Party for new students and proteges. Each team will complete the Mentor/Protege Action Contract. Follow-up phone calls and/or a letter congratulating the student for making the "senior year" of the I&C program should be mailed to the student, the high school teacher, and the parents. The mentoring process coordinator will follow up this activity with phone calls to selected individuals to assess the effectiveness of this activity.
- Mentors will continue to serve as adjunct faculty.
- Mentors may want to consider asking their companies to allow students to apply for tuition reimbursement.
- Mentors and students should arrange to meet informally as much as possible. By this time, the relationship should have evolved into a comfortable one that needs less structured activity.
- ACC teachers and students should attend a professional conference. Mentors should encourage students to attend a professional conference with them if such an activity is possible.
- Mentors and proteges will evaluate the process on an anonymous evaluation form that will be returned to the mentoring coordinator.
- The mentors, students, Advisory Committee members and all other interested parties will attend the "dutch treat" Spring banquet. Those students who have already obtained employment in the I&C field should be highlighted along with others being recognized. Those students who elect to pursue four-year degrees may get scholarships. If so, these should be announced. Eventually, it would be a good idea to invite outstanding graduates of the program to be guest speakers at this event.

Mixing a Few Additional Activities into the Plan

In addition to these activities, the mentoring process coordinator should receive from the mentor a sheet of background information and possible topics for guest lectures. This data will be compiled into a list that can be used by LISD and ACC faculty in recruiting guest lecturers/adjunct faculty.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING

From the business aspect, the nurturing of future workers strengthens the professional community and may also provide a vehicle for screening potential future employees. By forming training partnerships with high schools and colleges, personnel or human resources departments can attract ready-trained and highly motivated applicants. Forming training partnerships with

schools proves much less costly that post-hiring training programs and yields maximum use of resources for both the schools and the corporations. In addition, these partnerships result in excellent public relations for both business and education, since the public will see such moves as indications of effective schooling and efficient use of tax monies.

At the same time, these programs can contribute to the independence and self-respect of teachers and students. Mentoring can help teachers by giving them a window on state-of-the-art practices in industry. Mentoring can help students by equipping them with job skills needed in local communities (source: "A Partnership with Schools to Train Job Prospects," by Gayle Jasso, 1984, periodicals division, American Management Association)--in this case, through the infusion of 2+2 articulation program graduates into Greater Austin area advanced-technology industries. Mentoring can help students make a smooth transition from the classroom to the job--and can help students get some idea of how "office politics" are in effect--and some knowledge of the other "unwritten laws" not available for study in the classroom.

A PROCESS FOR PLANNING FUTURE MENTORING PROJECTS

The following suggestions for forming successful mentoring programs are offered in **Active Partnerships Guidebook**, published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Asking the Right Questions

These are questions that should be asked about mentoring programs in general. They are taken from a guidebook for planning mentoring programs between business and education, published by Northwest Regional Educational Laboratories. Planning the mentoring aspect of any future 2+2 project can be enhanced by reviewing the answers to these questions.

Question 1: Has a task force been formed for planning? Components: who's sponsoring? who will mentors be? who will the mentees be? how will mentors and mentees be trained? how will mentors and mentees be matched? What will be the program structure? How will program effectiveness be evaluated? What is the budget for the program and who will contribute or cover expenses for which activities? Expenses: salaries and benefits for project staff; telephone postage and office supplies; training materials and other duplication; fees for trainers; stipends for mentors; travel for trainers, mentors and staff; training facilities, refreshments; equipment use.

Question 2: Should additional sponsors be recruited? Additional sponsors can be recruited from a number of sources.

Question 3: Who will the mentors be? How will they be recruited? Characteristics of mentors: Self-awareness and self-confidence in work and in interactions with others. High standards and expectations of self and colleagues.

Enthusiasm and a sense of humor. Clear and effective communication skills (ability to express a point, defend a position, and confront hard issues without becoming overly aggressive and judgmental). Above all, mentors must believe in the potential of the young or inexperienced or disadvantaged in society to make positive contributions to the workforce. Sources for mentors: companies (female engineers), professional or trade associations, service organizations, colleges, universities and trade schools.

Question 4: Who will the mentees--or proteges--be? Questions about mentees include: High school and/or college students? Which sex? Grade level or year in school? Current grade point average? Ethnicity? Teacher or counselor recommendation? Major or career interest? Typical candidates for future mentees might include: displaced workers (women out of the work-force for a number of years now wanting or needing to re-enter, workers in a town where a major employer has shut down, chronically unemployed, and parolees); entry-level professionals; workers already employed in their chosen field but who aspire to a higher level or administrative positions; workers who wish to enter a different occupational field; first-year teachers or other profes-sional groups; disabled persons (selected according to type of disability).

Question 5: What's the provision for training mentors and mentees? Mentor training: Give them the purpose of the mentoring program. General roles and functions of a mentor. Specific responsibilities of mentors in the pro-grams. People who will be their mentees. Logistics of the mentoring pro-gram. Also getting-to-know-you activities, facts and figures, mentors in my life, and problem-solving.

Mentee training: Job-search methods. Interview techniques. Communication skills in the work place. Good work habits. Assertiveness training. Values clarification. Cultural sensitivity. Decision-making skills. Time management. Stress management. Goal-setting. How to benefit most from the mentor pro-gram. How to deal with potential problems.

Question 6: How will mentees and mentors be matched? The method of matching should be determined by the program goal. If the goal is to provide young people with role models, matching by sex or enthnicity may be desir-able. Many programs place a high value on enabling mentees to see people like themselves who are successful even if they are not in the exact occupa-tion the mentees may be considering. If the goal is to increase career awareness or provide job experience, the match should be made on the basis of the mentor's occupation and the mentee's occupational interest.

Question 7: How will the program be implemented? Mentors and mentees need guidelines. Training sessions to attend together. Tour of mentor's job site. Interviews with other workers at job site. Job "shadowing." Work expe-rience with mentee assigned certain tasks to complete under mentor's super-vision. Informal discussions on or off the job site. Culminating social events for all mentors and mentees. (This happens after the respective training sessions.)

Question 8: What tools will be used to evaluate program effectiveness? Once the partners have met and the program is underway, it is important for

the program coordinator to monitor the implementation of the program so that minor problems can be corrected before they become major ones. The effectiveness of individual events, such as training sessions, should be assessed, as well as the overall impact of the program when it is over each year. In order to organize the evaluation activities, the following four-step process may be helpful. Decide which components of your program you wish to evaluate. Formulate specific evaluation questions. Decide on data collection methods. Plan how the evaluation data will be used.

Evaluating the Process

It is important that a process be established for evaluating the mentoring process. In the LISD project, the evaluation aspect is being conducted "softly." For example, in the LISD project evaluation is built into the first stage when the mentoring coordinator makes telephone calls to selected individuals to determine whether or not the "match" has been made successfully. This step makes it possible to make "mid-course corrections" when necessary. Evaluation occurs again when participants complete an evaluation form each Spring.

The purpose of the evaluation process is to ensure that the process is working as efficiently and effectively as possible. It is only through evaluating the process that corrections can be made toward improvement--and evaluation also serve to enhance the communication process overall, since each person has the opportunity to offer feedback.

Anticipating the Answers

Establishing a process is relatively easy. However, the success of the mentoring system for I&C students at LISD will depend on more than establishing a process. The chief value of the program will be the success of the relationships that emerge from it. Therefore, one can hope that the mentoring process now beginning at LISD produces many close, nurturing, rewarding relationships--and that some of those relationships will last more than four years.

It is hoped that once students become accustomed to being mentored, they can form new relationships on the job that will reflect the fact that they have learned to seek and value having a mentor. Ultimately, one might hope that these students will mentor others after having successfully achieved an important niche in the workforce.

This document merely gives a model for starting the process. The rest is up to the people who will be involved. A process can have terminal objectives. Mentoring, however, is a lot more complicated than "meeting a terminal objective in the cognitive domain."

Successful mentoring is a matter of love--and time for growth--well-stirred with patience, knowledge and wisdom. The success of the process depends entirely on the people involved, and how well they come to find they are in harmony with one another. Step one is finding the mentors.

WANTED: Twenty good men and women. Perilous and somewhat prestigious journey into human relationship. Must be successful and have excellent communication skills. Courage, patience, good judgment, clear thinking, and self-esteem a plus. Must invest quality time and energy. Job offers no financial remuneration, but has unlimited potential for spiritual enlightenment. To find out more about this exciting opportunity, dial (512) 259-1198. Ask for Charley.

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